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SUBJECT: NAS Monthly Report June 2005

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In June 2005, the Colombian National Police (CNP) spray program eradicated 9,884 hectares of coca and 41 hectares of poppy. Anti-Narcotics Police (DIRAN) destroyed four cocaine HCL laboratories and captured nine metric tons of cocaine, one ton of cocaine base, and 70 kilos of heroin. End summary.

Eradication and Interdiction

¶2. (SBU) Eradication: During June, OV-10s operating from Apiay and Villavicencio, Meta Department, sprayed approximately 1,504 hectares of coca. AT-802s operating from Caucausia, Antioquia Department, sprayed approximately 6,521 hectares of coca. T-65s operating from Popayan, Cauca Department, sprayed 1,859 hectares of coca and 41 hectares of poppy. In total, CNP aircraft sprayed approximately 9,884 hectares of coca and 41 hectares of poppy during the month of June. Thus far in 2005 the CNP eradication program has sprayed more than 95,512 hectares of coca and 1,020 hectares of poppy.

¶3. (SBU) Armed narco-terrorists fired on eradication and COLAR aircraft 13 times during June, resulting in 38 impacts. The AT-802s and T-65s were struck six times each and OV-10s and UH-1Ns were struck once each. In the Plan Colombia Helicopter Program, ground fire struck UH-1Ns four times this month, UH-1HII once, and the UH-60Ls 19 times.

¶4. (SBU) During June, COLAR Plan Colombia helicopters continued to support CD Brigade troops and eradication operations in Caucausia and Apiay, as well as Infrastructure Security Strategy (ISS) training and operations in Saravena and training operations in Tolemaida. Plan Colombia helicopters transported 4,213 passengers, including 100 medical evacuation patients, and 76,000 pounds of cargo during 2,417 flight hours, 1,940 of which were dedicated to the Eradication Program.

¶5. (SBU) On June 22, the Plan Colombia Helicopter Program (PCHP) received the final four UH-1HII aircraft for the Infrastructure Security Strategy (ISS) Program. These aircraft will arrive in Saravena, Arauca Department, approximately July 10, pending nationalization and acceptance inventories. Four aircraft are currently on loan from other Plan Colombia bases to Saravena. These aircraft support a Quick Reaction Force trained to respond to terrorist attacks along 174 kilometers of petroleum pipeline in the department of Arauca. On June 6, the first ISS-supported combat mission in Saravena resulted in 14 guerrillas killed.

¶6. (SBU) PCHP helicopters provided crucial support to joint operations with the Colombian Army Counter-Narcotics Brigade (CD BDE) and the Colombian Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS) in which Colombian authorities captured the second in command of the FARC's 44th Front. PCHP aircraft also provided reconnaissance support during a successful hostage rescue mission.

¶7. (SBU) Interdiction: On June 9, elements of the Colombian Army Counter-Narcotics Brigade (CD BDE) conducted an operation to capture suspected narco-terrorists drug storage sites. The CD BDE uncovered 18 drug deposit locations on the road between Tumaco and Ipiales in Narino Department and captured nearly 1.5 tons of cocaine HCL, as well as weapons and precursor chemicals.

Air Bridge Denial (ABD)

¶8. (SBU) GOC assets tracked 4326 aircraft contacts over Colombia in the month of June; 36 were declared Unidentified, Assumed Suspect (UAS). Of these, the GOC intercepted two, but Colombian pursuit stopped when the aircraft reached the national borders. One of the aircraft landed at Maiquetia airport in Venezuela, where Venezuelan police arrested the four occupants.

CNP AVIATION

¶9. (SBU) In June, the CNP aviation operational tempo was almost twice that of the previous month. The three largest components of ARAVI's fleet clocked 2,677 mission hours. The UH-1HII helicopters flew 784 mission hours with an operational readiness (O.R.) rate of 47 percent. Thirty-one percent of the UH-1HII helicopters require depot-level structural repairs. Bell 212 helicopters flew 367 mission hours with an operational readiness rate of 66 percent, and UH-60L helicopters flew 230 mission hours with an operational readiness rate of 68 percent.

DIRAN

¶10. (SBU) During June, DIRAN destroyed four cocaine HCL laboratories and captured nine metric tons of cocaine, one ton of cocaine base, and 70 kilos of heroin.

¶11. (SBU) On June 16, joint operations with the Colombian Air Force and a DIRAN Task Force attacked a FARC 16th Front camp 117 miles east of San Jose del Guaviare in an attempt to capture Comandante Negro Acacio. Colombian forces killed four FARC guerrillas and captured two M4 carbines (with M203 grenade launchers), one AK47, and a 9mm pistol. DIRAN reported no casualties. Several computers were also seized, but Negro Acacio was not captured.

¶12. (SBU) On June 17, a US Coast Guard aerial platform detected a go-fast boat and initiated a Firewall event. A Colombian Navy Casa 235 continued to track the boat while a Colombian Air Force UH1-HII, from Barranquilla, Atlantico Department, flew to the Santa Marta DIRAN base and picked up seven DIRAN Jungla Commandos. The COLAF UH1-HII intercepted the Go-fast with over 1.6 tons of cocaine, and the Junglas, with the help of the Police ARAVI helicopters, captured all five crew members. The USG-provided Firewall communications net was employed throughout the event.

13.(SBU) From June 29 thru July 1, a CNP Task Force of 100 Junglas, 300 Carabineros, and support aircraft conducted operations in Valle de Cauca department against Diego Montoya, the Cartel del Norte de Valle, and the AUC. Colombian forces surrounded and searched suspected camps and farms, but only documents and one AUC member were seized.

Law Enforcement/Public Security

¶14. (SBU) Training: At the Espinal Training Center, 55 students graduated from the four-month Jungla Basic Course. Three new Carabinero Mobile Squadrons began their seven-week training course, and NAS sent 55 DIRAN students, four Carabineros, and 12 Colombian Army students to training in the United States.

¶15. (SBU) Seaport Security Program: DIRAN's new 12-member polygraph unit, established to ensure the integrity of police working in the airports and seaports, began examinations of Bogota DIRAN and airport police personnel June 27. After months of training and orientation, they are beginning a period of "on-the-job training" with guidance from a U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) polygraph examiner. Airport personnel examinations will last into August.

Environment

¶16. (SBU) In June, the spray complaints group received 92 complaints and is investigating 15 other cases. Three new complaints were paid during June, bringing the total complaints paid to 15. The environmental office will do a verification trip accompanied by representatives from the United Nations (SIMCI), Organization of American States (CICAD), and the U.S. ONDCP.

WOOD